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Message Text

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12
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-04 LAB-01 SIL-01 INSE-00 AGR-05

VO-01 SCA-01 /065 W
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R 250030Z OCT 74
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4514

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 9099

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR MX
SUBJ: REACTION TO PRESIDENTIAL MEETING: BRACEROS

REF: MEXICO 9057

1. MEDIA AND OTHER COMMENTATORS ON THE PRESIDENTIAL MEETING CONTINUE GROPING FOR SOME RATIONALE TO EXPLAIN GOM'S NEW POSITION ON THE BRACERO/ILLEGALS ISSUE. PRESIDENTIAL APOLOGISTS ARE SEEKING WAYS TO MINIMIZE THE INCONSISTENCY OF PAST GOM POSITION AND PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S ANNOUNCEMENT AT PRESIDENTIAL MEETING THAT MEXICO WILL DESIST FROM ITS EFFORTS TO SECURE A NEW BRACERO AGREEMENT.

2. EXCELSIOR COLUMNIST RICARDO GARIBAY ON OCTOBER 24 COMPLAINS THAT "SOME HAVE TRIED TO SEE THIS (NEW GOM POSITION ON BRACEROS) AS A DEVIATION...IT WOULD SEEM THAT THEY HAVE NOT WANTED TO CONSIDER ECHEVERRIA'S REASONS CALMLY AND OBJEC-TIVELY. IF THE U.S. DOES NOT WANT TO REACH A NEW AGREEMENT...NOTHING IN THE WORLD IS CAPABLE OF IMPOSING SUCH AN AGREEMENT UPON THEM." "A NEW AGREEMENT WOULD BE A BANDAGE UPON A CANCEROUS SORE." HE CONCLUDES THAT THE DUTY INCUMBENT NOT ONLY UPON ECHEVERRIA BUT ALL MEXICANS IS FOR MEXICO TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM ITSELF.
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3. ANOTHER COLUMNIST IN EXCELSIOR (FREQUENTLY CRITICAL OF THE GOM) CONSIDERS IT A MISTAKE FOR ECHEVERRIA TO HAVE ABANDONED THE ATTEMPT TO SECURE A NEW BRACERO AGREEMENT. HE POINTS OUT THAT THE NEW GOM POSITION SHOWS "SUDDEN CONTRAST BETWEEN THE OLD AND REITERATED INSISTENCE OF OUR FOREIGN SECRETARIAT AND OUR AMBASSADORS IN WASHINGTON TO OBTAIN" A NEW AGREEMENT. THE WRITER BELIEVES THAT ECHEVERRIA'S DECISION TO CEASE PRESSING FOR AN AGREEMENT ELIMINATES THE POSSIBILITY OF EVEN ESTABLISHING COMMISSIONS TO WORK ON THIS PROBLEM.

4. PERHAPS THE MOST BIZARRE COMMENTARY ON THE BRACERO/ ILLEGALS ISSUE IS THAT OF JORGE BUSTAMANTE PUBLICIZED ON COTOBER 24. BUSTAMANTE, OF THE COLEGIO DE MEXICO WHO HAS SUPPOSEDLY BEEN STUDYING THIS PROBLEM FOR SIX YEARS, ALLEGES THAT THE REAL PRESSURE FOR A NEW BRACERO AGREEMENT COMES FROM U.S. FARMERS AND RANCHERS. THE PRESSURE, HE THINKS, WAS EXERTED THROUGH PRESIDENT NIXON (WHO, HE SAYS, WAS LAWYER FOR THIS GROUP IN CALIFORNIA) UNTIL THE PRESSURE OF U.S. TRADE UNIONS FORCED NIXON TO DESIST. NOW, BUSTAMANTE SAYS, PRESIDENT FORD ACTUALLY DESIRES A NEW BRACERO PROGRAM IN ORDER TO PLEASE THE FARMERS AND RANCHERS, BUT HE DOES NOT WANT TO OFFEND U.S. LABOR. THEREFORE, THE ARGUMENT RUNS, PRESIDENT FORD IS TRYING TO MAKE THE U.S. PUBLIC BELIEVE THAT IT IS NOT HE BUT RATHER PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA WHO WANTS A NEW BRACERO PROGRAM. BUSTAMANTE'S "DATA" IS GARBLED AND ICORRECT WITH REFERENCE TO THE RODINO BILL, IMMIGRATION VISAS TO THE U.S., AND HIS "EXPLANATION" OF THIS ISSUE IS HARD TO TAKE SERIOUSLY.

5. COMMENT: THE MOMENTUM AND THE STRONG EMOTIONAL QUALITY OF MEXICAN EFFORTS TO OBTAIN A BRACERO AGREEMENT IN RECENT YEARS CAN NOT EASILY BE TURNED OFF. IN LIGHT OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S PUBLIC DECISION NOT TO INSIST ON A NEW BRACERO AGREEMENT, NO GOM OFFICIAL WILL CONTRADICT HIM. THE PROBLEM, HOWEVER, FROM THE MEXICAN POINT OF VIEW REMAINS AS GREAT AND URGENT AS BEFORE. THE NATIONALISTS AND ZEALOTS WHO HAVE PRESSED THIS ISSUE, BOTH GOM OFFICIALS AND OUT-SIDERS, WILL FIND IT HARD TO TURN THEIR ATTENTION ELSEWHERE AND MAY CONCENTRATE IN THE FUTURE ON ALLEGATIONS OF MIS-
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TREATMENT OF MEXICANS ILLEGALLY IN THE U.S. AND ON EFFORTS TO PERSUADE THE U.S. TO "REGULARIZE" THE STATUS OF SUCH ILLEGALS. FOREIGN SECRETARY RABASA TODAY TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT THE WITHDRAWAL ON BRACEROS WAS THE PRESIDENT'S OWN DECISION AND IN HIS OPINION FOR "MISTAKEN REASONS", WHICH HE WOULD NOT DESCRIBE. HE SAID THAT CRITICISM OF THE FOREIGN SECRETARIAT ON THIS SCORE IS INTENSE, AND IT IS USUALLY INTERPRETED (MISTAKENLY) AS A QUID PRO QUO FOR

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"A CHANGE OF U.S. POLICY ON THE CHARTER."
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, PRESS COMMENTS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, MEETINGS, IMMIGRANTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MEXICO09099
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740304-0861
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741016/aaaaanki.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: MEXICO 9057
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 SEP 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <05 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REACTION TO PRESIDENTIAL MEETING: BRACEROS
TAGS: PBOR, MX
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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